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ULSTER ON ITS OWN;

——— OR ———

An Easy Way with Ireland.

BEING A PROPOSAL OF SELF-GOVERNMENT FOR THE FIVE COUNTIES ROUND LOUGH NEAGH.

BY AN ULSTER PRESBYTERIAN.

"*The instruments also of the churl are evil. He deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words even when the needy speaketh right.*

"*But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.*"— Isaiah—chap. 32; v. 7 and 8.

"*If a practical scheme could be suggested, or was desired by Ulster, we are ready at any moment to entertain it.*"—

Mr. Gladstone—House of Commons, 8th April, 1886

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" The reproach of being unpracticable and artificial, attaches by right not to those who insist on uncompromising efforts to remove abuses, but to a very different class—to those, namely, who are credulous enough to suppose that abuses and bad customs and wasteful ways of doing things will remove themselves. This credulity, which is a cloak for ignorance and stupidity, overlooks the fact that there are bodies of men, more or less numerous, attached by every selfish interest they have to the maintenance of these abusive customs."

Lord Morley in "Compromise," p. 210.

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THE imminence of some measure of self government for Ireland being practically assured by the results of the last election, and the pledge of the Prime Minister, it becomes a question of the highest moment to consider in more or less detail the various alternatives that offer themselves as possible settlements of this eternal question. At the two extremities stand, firstly, the status quo, secondly, Gladstonian Home Rule schemes of 1886 and 1892. Within these limits lie all varieties of more or less autonomous possibilities, including Mr. Birrell's ill-fated Councils Bill of 1907. We think that the status quo may be ruled out of Court at once. Apart from the fact that Imperial Federation would necessitate some form of devolution, it is absolutely imperative in the interest of the overworked Imperial Parliament alone. As Mr. A. Chamberlain admitted at Bury last Monday when he said he " agreed with Sir E. Grey that Parliament was overworked, and there was a case made out for the extension of Local Government." Mr. Gladstone's scheme has been the subject of discussion for almost a generation, and it would now be difficult to say anything new regarding it. It represents the maximum that Great Britain is likely to concede. Mr. Birrell's Bill had a brief and inglorious career, and though in many ways a good measure and worthy of a much better fate, quickly foundered on the rock of educational control, on that wreck-strewn shore of Anglo-Irish Statesmanship.

All the measures cited above had one element in common, they treated Ireland as an entity, and proposed to legislate for it as a homogeneous unit. This we believe to have been their cardinal mistake, and this mistake, if wiser counsels do not prevail, seems likely to be committed again. For however much we may deplore it, the plain truth is that there is no united Ireland—Grattan's Protestant Parliament, imposed on a Catholic people, is no real exception to the fact—and never has been in the whole course of its long eventful and unhappy history. In reality there is not one, but two Irelands, different in ideals, different in outlook, entirely different in ways of life and mind, drifting further and further apart, and now, in this year of grace, more opposed to each other in all that makes for nationality than are, for instance, the Austrian and the Hun. That it is so does not admit of doubt, however much it may be deplored, and constitutes in our opinion a factor that British Statesmanship must take into account in dealing with the Irish question. The result of more than 50 years of this teaching, accentuated rather than lessened during the last 20 years, is that there exists a fierce, determined, burning animosity in the minds of the people of Protestant Ulster towards a sharing in any form of national government with the people of Celtic Ireland. But is there no other pathway possible through this "Blasted Heath," and must the witch's cauldron of Irish discontent still boil and simmer and overflow till the end of time? It would be a poor alternative merely to change the location and the ingredients of the brew, and that, we are afraid, the proposals now before the public are only too likely to accomplish. Surely it is not possible, however, that British Statesmanship, which has plucked so many triumphs of constitutional pacification from the very jaws of unrest, sedition, and open rebellion even, must own itself beaten here. When the "Heaven sent Minister," William Pitt, came to consider the question of some form of self government for Canada, he was confronted with conditions very similar to what exists in Ireland now. One part of the country was French, Catholic, and agricultural. The other part was English, Protestant and industrial. There was the same racial bitterness and religious animosity as exist in Ireland at present. It was most improbable that a stable government could be formed from such material

at that time, and consequently Pitt took the courageous, and to us now, very obvious course of giving each section a complete and independent government of its own. Would it be less obvious or less courageous in Ireland to-day?

The idea of an Ulster (or N.E. Ulster) and a Celtic Parliament was promulgated by Matthew Arnold more than 20 years ago, and this we believe to be the only feasible solution of the present difficulty, and, if considered fairly, presents possibilities of a reasonable success. That it will run counter to the fond and cherished ideals of the Irish people cannot be gainsaid, but it contains the germs of a peaceful settlement and a certain relative finality which are infinitely more desirable, and with the growth of mutual tolerance, mutual prosperity, and mutual respect may, and we fervently hope will, ultimately lead by a process of peaceful evolution, by mere effluxion of time toning down animosities and removing differences, to the ultimate consummation of the patriot's dream.

Let us disabuse our minds of sentiment and consider the question purely on its merits. One most important fact that must never be overlooked or forgotten is that **Mr. Chamberlain proposed in 1887 that a separate Parliament should be established in Ulster.** This project had been often mooted before, but without arousing any enthusiasm or gaining any support, and the reason is not far to seek. "Ulster" is purely a geographical expression, and is utterly devoid of any distinctive racial, religious or political significance. Four of the counties comprised in it are largely Protestant, four largely Catholic, while one—Co. Tyrone—has a slight Catholic majority, but from its geographical position it is difficult to see how it could be disassociated from the four Protestant counties. To sever the four Catholic counties from the rest of Celtic Ireland would be to perpetuate a gross injustice and to commit a signal blunder. Community of interest and a perfect identity of sentiment and aspiration demand that they shall remain members of the larger body. We have now five counties left in Ulster, viz., Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, and Londonderry, in which with the one exception the majority is preponderatingly Protestant. Now, whatever may be the failings of this industrious community, it is at least univer-

sally admitted that they are rich in energy and intelligence, and in a strong and aggressive individualism which is in striking contrast to the "other worldliness," the easy going fatalism, however induced, of Celtic Ireland. Whatever the future may have in store, their coalescence in a common policy is virtually unthinkable at the present time. They have but little in common except the name of the land they live in, and since their marriage has brought so little happiness it would surely be simple worldly wisdom to proceed amicably to the logical extremity of a divorce.

The five North-Eastern Counties form a solid co-terminous area grouped round Lough Neagh, with a preponderatingly Protestant population, as the following table shows :—

County.	R. Catholic.	Protestant, &c.
Antrim (Including Belfast)...	125,373	419,853
Down	64,467	141,172
Armagh	56,652	68,740
Tyrone	82,404	68,163
Londonderry	65,296	79,108
	394,192	777,336

It may, of course, be urged that the Five Counties are not of sufficient extent or importance to form a government of its own, but we should not let the idea of mere bigness blind us to other and more vital reasons for exceptional treatment. Now, too, that Wales is "out" for self government. and the demands of the Irish Nationalists likely to be recognized, the claim of the Five Counties to local autonomy deserves candid and serious consideration. Compared with many of the self-governing dominions of the Empire, who have their own seats allotted to them at the mother's hearth, it occupies a decidedly strong position.

Beginning at home, however, and taking Wales first, we find that the total population of the Principality, according to the 1901 census, is 1,716,423, of which more than half —largely recruited from the S.E. of Ireland—is in the county of Glamorgan, attracted there by its great natural resources and industries of coal and iron. In other words, the Five Counties of N.E. Ulster contain about one third of a million more inhabitants than eleven out of the twelve

counties of Wales. Again, Wales contains a population only one twentieth of the whole population of England, whilst the population of the Five Counties is more than one fourth of that of Ireland; so that relatively to the parent country the proportionate claim is five times greater in the latter than in the former case.

To go further afield, the population of the Five Counties is more than any one of 19 states of the American Union, and more than half of that of the kingdom of Norway.

Coming now to the outer Empire, we find that it would have a population more than half as large as the province of Ontario, and more than two-thirds that of Quebec. It is only slightly exceeded by New South Wales or Victoria, while it is twice as great as that of Queensland, three times that of South Australia, and no less than 30 per cent. in excess of the whole commonwealth of New Zealand. It is even greater than the whole white population of South Africa, which sent no less than four Prime Ministers to the previous Colonial Conference. We thus see that it takes a good average position beside any of the self-governing provinces of the Empire which have their own complete legislative systems with judiciary and executive subservient thereto.

We now come to the vital question of trade, and here again the claim of the Five Counties is undeniable. The total value of the foreign trade of Ireland is about 130 million per annum. It is not possible, we believe, to differentiate accurately between the foreign trade of one portion of this country and another, but from certain data available a reasonable approximation may be arrived at. The gross tonnage of imports and exports entered and cleared at Dublin for the year 1906 amounted to 2,606,240 tons, while for Belfast the corresponding figures were 3,377,163 tons. We feel certain that the preponderance of Belfast is still more marked to-day. In addition a cursory survey will show that if we except porter and tea, the value of the goods passing through Belfast is much in excess of that of Dublin, so that we cannot be far wrong in assuming the value of the foreign trade of the Five Counties—which includes all ports from Londonderry to Newry—to be about £70,000,000

per annum. The following table shows the value of the foreign trade of each of the great dependencies :—

Canada £109,000,000
(population 5,766,000, area $3\frac{3}{4}$ million sq. miles).
New South Wales.. £66,000,000
Including Gold, £6,897,000.
Victoria £45,000,000
Including Gold, £3,200,000.
South Australia ... £17,900,000 ,, ,,
Queensland ..... £17,500,000 ,, ,, £2,200,000
West Australia .... £16,200,000 ,, ,, £3,300,000
New Zealand ..... £28,500,000 ,, ,, £2,093,000
South Africa £119,840,000
(Gold and Diamonds £27,500,000, which pays for correspondingly inflated imports).
Newfoundland .... £450,000 Population, 230,000

From this we see that without those great mineral riches which Providence has showered in Wales, South Africa, and the Australias, but solely through the energy and intelligence of our own inhabitants, we occupy a place in the world not one whit behind any of these. Thus the foreign trade of the Five Counties is nearly double that of Norway, or Portugal, or Roumania, and is in excess of that of Sweden, which has a population nearly five times as large.

If Newfoundland, which has a population of 223,000, or a very little more than Co. Antrim alone, leaving out Belfast, is granted complete self-government apart from Canada, it is surely the purest fudge to say that the Five Counties are incapable of governing themselves, or that the scheme is not a practicable one. The statement is only made to blind the people of N.E. Ulster to the strength of their case for separate treatment apart from the rest of Ireland.

So much for the merely material aspect of the question. We have kept " other considerations " to the last.

The first important question that will arise in the tense atmosphere of Irish politics is that of the position of the

minority in each province. Well, the simple fact is that there would be 348,679 Protestants in Irish Ireland, and 394,192 Roman Catholics in the Five Counties, a by no means contemptible minority on either side, and one that could neither be overridden nor ignored. Furthermore, if this division were accomplished there would be 395,000 Presbyterians in the Five Counties, and 48,000 (little more than the population of Derry City) in the rest of Ireland. The Episcopalians would be much more evenly divided. There would be 294,000 of them in the Five Counties, and 287,000 in the rest of Ireland. If large constituencies were adopted, say a whole county, or even more, as a unit, each unit returning a considerable number of members, elected on a single vote franchise, parochialism would be largely obviated and a coherent minority would run no risk of being under-represented or oppressed.

If the Protestants of Ulster can be brought to realise that their way of peace lies in looking fairly at the Irish demand and recognising the historic grievances which have already been conceded by the whole civilised world, all our Colonies included, and if their quondam leaders could be induced to desist from their violent and unceasing attempts to stir up the flames of bigotry against their fellow countrymen, much would at least be gained. So much sound and fury, mainly for political purposes, has been aroused over the Ne Temere decree that it has been conveniently forgotten that as late as 1844 the Church of Ireland held that a marriage of an Episcopalian and a Presbyterian by a Presbyterian clergyman was not legally binding. We quote from Reed's History of the Presbyterian Church, Vol. 3, p 486—It says: "A marriage between an Episcopalian and a Presbyterian, celebrated by a Presbyterian minister tried in 1840 in the Consistorial Court in Armagh, was decided invalid. It was contended that no minister in Ireland, except one ordained according to the rites of the Establishment, was competent to celebrate a marriage between a Nonconformist and an Episcopalian. The agitation of this subject created much irritation throughout Ulster. It was well known that the Protestant Primate of Armagh contributed largely to the legal expenses of the litigation, and that his influence was employed to prevent the adoption of such measures

of legislative redress as Presbyterians desiderated. Dr. Stewart, of Broughshane, who became Moderator in 1843, had frequent interviews on the subject with members of Her Majesty's Government. At length in 1844 a Bill was introduced which proposed to secure a number of the privileges sought by Presbyterians." One hundred years is little in the life of a Church, and if the power were left would we be any better treated in 1943 than our fathers were in 1843 ?

But such a movement as we propose, if it comes into being, must spring from the people themselves. To the Presbyterians of Ulster the question is a vital one. The voices that speak for them are not their own. They are still led by the old ascendancy party, and are, and have been for nearly one hundred years, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water to the pampered place hunters of the Episcopalian Church.

The following summary, taken from President Hamilton's "History of the Presbyterian Church," shews the humiliating position that Presbyterians occupied in Ireland at the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill.

	Episcopalians.	Roman Catholics.	Presbyterians
Peerage	174	13	0
Privy Council	36	9	0
Lieutenants of Counties	29	2	1
Judges	11	5	1
County Court Judges	14	6	2
Resident Magistrates	53	25	2
Inspectors General of Constabulary	4	1	0
,, (County) ,,	30	9	0
,, (District) ,,	188	37	5
Royal University Senators	9	17	8
Intermediate Commissioners	3	4	2
National Commissioners	6	10	3
National Secretaries and Heads of Depts.	3	5	1
Board of Works Commissioners, &c.	18	3	0
L.G.B. Secretaries, &c.	16	5	1
Superintendents of Lunatic Asylums	19	5	0
Land Commissioners, Chief	2	3	0
Do. Assistant	3	7	0

If the position is better now it has been won on Mr. Chamberlain's celebrated principle of "Ransom," and with grudging and ungracious acquiescence from the ascendancy party. There is not much to boast of yet, however, if we investigate the following figures taken from the "White Paper" published by Parliament last month on the present constitution of the Irish Magistracy. According to the 1901 census there were 581,089 Episcopalians and 443,276 Presbyterians in Ireland. The latter must be an exceptionally stupid and incapable lot, because whilst there are 2,825 Episcopalians on the Bench, there seems to be only 643 Presbyterians in Ireland who have sufficient intelligence and respectability for this elevated position.

A few years ago the position would have been even worse, but there is still evidently a good deal of the old leaven left. Truly "its a mean dog that always licks the stick." Presbyterians have everything to gain from such a scheme as we have outlined, as they are in a clear majority over every other body in the Five Counties. If they would desist from their insensate opposition and plump for a Northern Parliament, and if Scotland, as is most probable, gains federal independence, the Blue Banner would float supreme over two out of the five constituent parliaments of Great Britain. They will then gain complete control of education, that "open sesame" to success in this strenuous century, and thus dispose for good, as far as they are concerned, of —possibly—one of the least promising features of a Dublin Parliament, the approximation of education throughout the country to the ideas and teaching of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy.

Furthermore, in any scheme of taxation that may be evolved, the danger of its incidence pressing unduly on industries and allowing agriculture to escape its fair share of the burden, as might conceivably happen under other circumstances, would be entirely obviated. In approaching our co-religionists in Scotland and England with such a compromise we can rely on **Mr. Gladstone's promise made in his place in Parliament on the 8th April, 1886, "that if a practical scheme could be suggested or was desired by Ulster, we were ready at any moment to entertain it."** That offer with the imprimatur of his great name has never been openly

modified or withdrawn. With the experience of almost a century of dependent legislatures and divided control in all our self-governing colonies, with the example of 45 States of the American Union before us, it would not surely pass the wit of man to arrange for the severance on a fair and equitable basis, of the Five Counties from the rest of Ireland. It would be still further simplified by the fact that in all matters of external taxation the decision would lie exclusively with the Imperial Parliament.

Much opposition may, no doubt, be expected from those whose idea is one Irish Parliament. It is a great, a generous and noble ideal, but what chance has it of peaceful realization in our or our children's time? The line of cleavage is too deep, and we venture to believe that "the Doctors" have always made the fundamental mistake of hitherto approaching it on the lateral plane of safeguards and restrictions. The fracture is sheer, and peace can only eventuate from a clear and perpendicular stroke. Some day let us fondly hope, with the growth of mutual tolerance, mutual prosperity, and mutual respect, the disunited fragments may again peacefully, perhaps gladly, coalesce, and the patriot's dream come true of a contented and a United Ireland.

One word more, Ulster, Presbyterian Ulster, is at the parting of the ways, and she must now make her final and irrevocable choice. The "Protestant minority" that she is being asked in such harrowing tones to sacrifice herself for is an Episcopalian minority, which for three centuries has been well able to look after itself and anything else that happened to come its way. One illustrious example of how well patriotism and piety have repaid a certain class in Ireland in the past presents itself in the history of the noble Beresfords. A generation or two ago an account was drawn up from various Parliamentary returns which shewed what profit various branches of this family obtained through the Church from Ireland. First on the list is Lord John G. Beresford, ultimately Archbishop of Armagh. From 1805 to 1834 he drew in salaries the sum of £348,683. Then comes Rev. Geo. Beresford, who in 32 years got £296,864. Next the Rev. Chas., of that ilk, who in 29 years received £111,225. Then the Hon. and Rev. G. D., who got £57,926 in 34 years; next the Hon. and Rev. W., who in 26 years

received £38,210. Then Lord Decies, who in 28 years received £36,619. Then the Rev. J. J., who got £13,532 in 13 years ; and finally there was the Rev. J. G. Beresford, who in 9 years received £13,395. Thus in 34 years eight Beresfords drew from Ireland as ministers of the Irish Church no less a sum than £916,454, or £200,000 more than the lump sum given to the whole Presbyterian Church in Ireland in commutation of the Regium Donum in 1869. Under the circumstances would not one expect wisdom to be justified of her children ? True it is that the present attitude of Protestant Ulster has gained her the questionable support of English Toryism, with all the retrogressive tendencies that it entails, and no doubt though for far other reasons than her interest, she has that support in full, but of what value is it to her to-day ? Alienated from her sister churches, ousted from the stream of liberal tendencies, she stands isolated and alone. The Presbyterian Liberal of Scotland, the Nonconformist Liberal of England are her bitter and relentless foes, and to them alone ought she to be able to look for sympathy and support. We believe, however, that if a practical scheme such as we have outlined were formulated and accepted by the Presbyterians of the Five Counties and placed before the Free Churches of Great Britain, it would ensure such a measure of support that the Liberal Cabinet would be forced by their own supporters to accept it. Mr. Redmond, too, may be cited in virtual support of their claim. Controverting an argument for the supposed analogy between Ireland and England, Mr. Redmond said "There is not historical identity—no two nations in Europe have histories more dissimilar. There is not identity of character—it is actually part of the argument of our opponents that there are deep and ineradicable differences of character between the two peoples. There is not identity of condition . . . England is a manufacturing country, Ireland is an agricultural one. What identity is there. The identity imparted by the Act of Union." Now if we make the necessary verbal transpositions we could not have a more excellent presentation of the Ulster case. We ask again—Why cannot the Presbyterians of Ulster speak for themselves ? It is a most remarkable fact that if we examine the names of those taking a prominent part in opposing any and every measure of self-

government for Ireland, in crowding into public platforms, at the founding of Unionist clubs, and stirring up ill feeling generally, it will be found that at least 90 per cent. of them are Episcopalians. Why is this? Is it for the greater glory of God or the greater good of the Empire think ye? or, tell it not in Gath, is it only because they fear that the loaves and fishes they have monopolised so long are at last getting beyond their grasp? That at least is what is believed by the Presbyterians of Scotland and the Free Churchmen of England, and that is why they have been driven to ignore their co-religionists in Ulster hitherto, and also in great part owing to the unreasonable antagonism they have so obtusely offered to every possible variation of the Irish demand. Perhaps even yet, however, it is not too late, and a sane and workable proposal which would appeal to their sense of fairness might still induce them to throw the weight of their great power into the balance and irresistibly top the beam.

But it must be a fair and reasonable scheme, promulgated by fair, moderate and reasonable men, and not the "red fool fury" that passes for statesmanship amongst the junta of Episcopalian lawyers "on the make," who presume to lead the people of Ulster at this crisis of their fate We have seen too much of this breed in the past to trust them for long. It is fully time that the Presbyterians of Ulster were rid of the "Manchus" and their braggart "Banner Men," who have sucked Ireland as dry as the palace gang did China in the past; and it will be a fortunate day for N.E. Ulster that sees Belfast installed—as many of us hope—as the fitting Capital of a free, prosperous, and contented Federal State.

BELFAST,
26th January, 1912.

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